



Laikipia Wildlife Forum  
CONSERVATION IN ACTION

# Forum Focus Newsletter



**Conservation  
in Action**  
Q4 Edition 2023

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Opuntia stricta converted  
into animal feeds

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ILMAMUSI's Walk Wild Event Unveils  
the Power of Unity in Mukogodo Forest

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A Tree For My River

## BECOME OUR MEMBER TODAY

Join us in making a difference for wildlife conservation and the restoration of our natural resources in the greater Laikipia region. As a friend, philanthropist, and well-wisher, your support is vital to the success of the Laikipia Wildlife Forum.

With your generous donation, we can continue to work towards championing for wildlife conservation and sustainable natural resources management in the greater Laikipia landscape. Your contribution, no matter the size, will help us to ensure a future where the landscapes flora and fauna thrives and flourishes. Please consider making a donation today and together, we can create a better environment for all.

Also, you can access our membership brochure using the provided QR Code and feel free to subscribe to any of the membership categories highlighted.



### PAYMENT DETAILS

Name: Laikipia Wildlife Forum

A/C Number: 0100004071926

Bank: Stanbic Bank

Branch: Nanyuki Branch

Or Through

MPESA

Paybill Number: 898370

A/C Name: Membership or Your Name

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## ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

We are delighted to present the Quarter 4 Forum Focus Newsletter, celebrating yet another quarter of dedicated efforts and notable achievements in the realm of conservation. Our team continues to advance initiatives promoting conservation, good governance, and sustainability in natural resource management within the expansive Laikipia Landscape.

Our deepest appreciation goes to our esteemed development partners, including the Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) of the United Nations, the Mazingira Conservation Fund (MCF), and our most recent collaborator, Alliance Bioversity International-CIAT. The generous financial, technical, and overall support from these partners has been instrumental in the successful implementation of our programs in this fourth quarter. We extend heartfelt thanks for their unwavering commitment to our cause, which has played a pivotal role in driving our accomplishments.

Gratitude is also extended to the National Government, represented by Lead Agencies and Departments, County Governments within our jurisdiction, the Private Sector, and Civil Society Organizations (CSOs) for their ongoing collaboration and partnership. Together, we have made significant strides in effective wildlife and natural resource management, as well as environmental conservation. Your continued support has been crucial to our collective success.

The achievements and milestones we celebrate at LWF are a direct outcome of the exceptional collaboration among our dedicated staff and stakeholders. We express our thanks for your unwavering dedication, passion, and expertise, all of which have contributed to positive change in our region.

We firmly believe that teamwork is the cornerstone of extraordinary outcomes. Therefore, we extend sincere gratitude to all our members for their unwavering support and invaluable contributions. Your collaborative spirit and commitment to our shared vision have propelled us forward on our journey to realizing our vision.

As you peruse this Forum Focus, we hope it not only showcases our work, achievements, lessons learned, and best practices but also serves as an inspiration for a collaborative approach towards creating a sustainable future for our environment and precious natural resources.

***Benedict Erick Omondi***  
***Communications Manager***

## DIRECTOR'S NOTE



The year 2023 was a unique one for Laikipia Wildlife Forum. It is the year that LWF reverted to its renowned name: Laikipia Wildlife Forum (LWF) after being Laikipia Forum (LF) for 5 years.

It is also the year that a new Board of Directors led by Dr. Romano Kiome took charge of the organization and held four Board meetings and an Annual General Meeting (AGM) under the revived LWF.

Being LWF, we were mandated to get back to project and programme-implementation, making us move from being a Secretariat, which had been the core duty of LF. With implementation came the revival of old networks and partnerships as well as the establishment of new ones. We further strengthened those that existed during the time we were a Secretariat thus enabling a smooth transition. Our implementing partners in 2023 were the Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) of the UN, CIAT, the Kenya Water and Sanitation Civil Society Network (KEWASNET) and Mazingira Conservation Fund (MCF). In working with them, we have made several milestones across our six thematic areas: wildlife, water, rangelands, conservation education, land use, and tourism.

This final quarter of 2023 witnessed the climax of most activities as the year closed. "My Farm Trees" which is funded by CIAT and aims to transform smallholder-led restoration efforts, continues to transform lives and landscapes in Mukogodo West Ward of Laikipia North. With FAO, we continue to support forest and landscape restoration through removal of the invasive *Opuntia stricta* and reseeded the degraded land.

FAO is dedicated to supporting interventions aimed at restoring degraded landscapes in the Arid and Semi-Arid Lands (ASALs) under the project "The Restoration Initiative (TRI) GEF 6," that is being implemented in Laikipia, Isiolo, and Marsabit Counties.

Being one of the implementers of this Initiative, we participated in its 5th Global Learning Workshop held in Dar es Salaam Tanzania, from 6th to 10th November, 2023. Further, FAO and LWF are in the initial stages of a pilot project aimed at utilizing the plant as animal feed.

With funding from KEWASNET, LWF, Mount Kenya Water Ewaso Partnership (MKEWP), and other partners facilitated the engagement of the Private Sector in water management in the Mount Kenya Region through Technical Working Groups (TWGs). The MCF boosted the capacity of five Community-Based Organizations (CBOs) mainly by empowering the youth to champion the fight against climate change to restoring fragile ecosystems and fostering economic independence of women.

On partnerships, networking and membership, we were pleased to make a courtesy call to LEWA Wildlife Conservancy. We discussed among others, membership and working together in Conservation Education. We were also delighted to receive a courtesy call from Justdiggit; a visit that culminated in agreeing to explore possible areas of synergies in 2024. One of our members, Nanyuki Green Champions Self Help Group initiative, share their story 'A TREE FOR MY RIVER.'

LWF has always empowered young people and this quarter presented an opportunity to have Candy Emily from Jomo Kenyatta University of Agriculture and Technology (JKUAT) on student attachment. She shares her transformative experience.

In a nutshell, all work and no play makes Jack a dull boy hence after working all-year long, it was time to loosen up, stretch our muscles, test our fitness and enjoy the fresh air of Mukogodo Forest by participating in the 'Walk Wild' event. The event, organized by ILMAMUSI Community Forest Association (CFA) is an affirmation that partnerships between communities and other stakeholders can contribute to a bigger impact. The third edition in 2024 can only get bigger and better. Let's walk together.

**Ms. Celline Achieng'**  
Executive Director  
Laikipia Wildlife Forum

## ABOUT LAIKIPIA WILDLIFE FORUM

Laikipia Wildlife Forum also referred to as LWF, is a dynamic membership led conservation organization supporting, coordinating and facilitating conservation and natural resource management initiatives within the greater Laikipia Landscape.

Laikipia Wildlife Forum also referred to as LWF, is a dynamic membership led conservation organization supporting, coordinating and facilitating conservation and natural resource management initiatives within the greater Laikipia Landscape. We provide a platform for dialogue for a cross section of land owners and land users including local community groups, private ranchers, pastoralists, small-scale farmers and tourism industry players.

Our mantra of “Forumness” calls on us to bring people together to work on matters relevant to natural resource management. LWF provides a platform for people to find solutions to common problems. This is what makes it unique and is the origin of Laikipia Wildlife Forum.

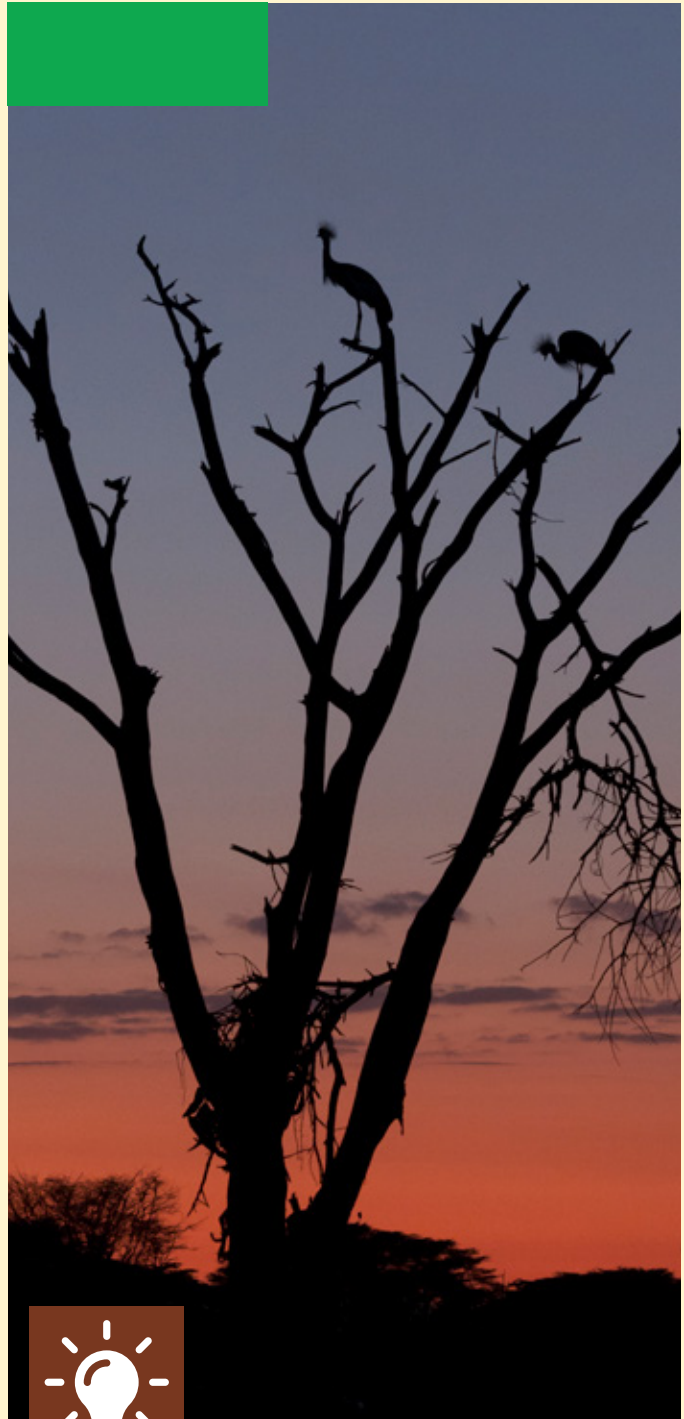
### OUR VISION

To nurture, support, and partner with organizations championing wildlife conservation and sustainable natural resource management within the greater Laikipia region

### OUR MISSION

To realize a productive and robust Upper Ewaso Ng’iro landscape that supports livelihoods and healthy populations of wildlife

**Our mantra of “Forumness” calls on us to bring people together to work on matters relevant to natural resource management.**



**LWF provides a platform for people to find solutions to common problems**



## COMMUNITY-DRIVEN CONSERVATION: STORIES OF IMPACT FROM THE MAZINGIRA CONSERVATION FUND

In 2023, five distinct projects blossomed under the Mazingira Conservation Fund's (MCF's) care, each sowing seeds of hope across the region. From empowering youth to champion the fight against climate change to restoring fragile ecosystems and fostering economic independence for women, these initiatives are transforming Laikipia, one tangible achievement at a time.

This article invites you to journey alongside these five impactful projects, witnessing firsthand the power of community, innovation, and unwavering commitment.

### Empowering Youthful Stewardship

The Leo Project sowed the seeds of environmental consciousness in Laikipia's youth. Two comprehensive climate resilience training programs equipped 52 youths with vital knowledge on climate change, policy advocacy, and environmental commitment. The project further established a tree nursery at Muramati Primary School, engaging 25 students in hands-on environmental education through seedling cultivation and care.



*James Njihia leads an engaging session on Conservation Education during Phase 2 of the Climate Resilience Training hosted at the Leo Project Resource Center in Jua Kali.*

This initiative promises a future generation deeply invested in Laikipia's ecological well-being.



## Restoring Primate Habitats

The Ontulili Primates Protection (OPP) embarked on a mission to revitalize the degraded riparian corridor vital for primate habitat. Their efforts yielded the planting of 3,000 tree seedlings and distribution of Super Napier grass cuttings to 23 farmers for planting on their lands. This collaborative approach not only fostered community involvement but also secured future food sources for primate populations. Additionally, OPP organized art classes, engaging participants in creative expression for conservation awareness.



*The MCF Grants Officer joins the Ontulili Primates Protection team, including the Project Manager, during the distribution of 30 tree seedlings to 100 farmers, fostering biodiversity and sustainable farming*

## Empowering Pastoral Communities

The Oramat Lenaboisho Cooperative Society (OLCS) championed gender equality and sustainable livelihoods for pastoral communities. Five women groups received training in financial literacy and leadership, equipping them to navigate economic decision-making. The OLCS further facilitated market exploration and the purchase of six steers for fattening, paving the way for improved livestock management and shared economic benefits. This initiative underscores MCF's dedication to gender-inclusive conservation.



*Oramat Lenaboisho Cooperative Society officials hand over steers to representatives of the women groups*

## Reclaiming Cultural Heritage

The Naatum Women Group embarked on a mission to reclaim their cultural space, the Naatum Cultural Manyattas. Their unwavering efforts saw the clearance of one acre of invasive the *Opuntia stricta*, which consequently paved the way for the reintroduction of indigenous grass species and vegetable cultivation. This revitalization not only restores the group's cultural heritage but also promotes sustainable land management practices for future generations.



*Emmanuel Miliko from Green Earth Warriors guides Naatum Women Group members through a training session on land restoration using the semi-circular bunds (half-moons) technique, aiming to reclaim the land where *Opuntia* was cleared*

## Unlocking Ecotourism Potential

The Ilmamusi Community Forest Association (CFA) focused on bolstering Mukogodo Forest's ecotourism potential. Their strategic efforts included constructing portable toilets for campsites, engaging in revenue-sharing discussions with the Kenya Forest Service (KFS), and organizing a forum with local tourism facilities.

Additionally, the CFA revamped their website and designed promotional materials, effectively positioning Mukogodo as a premier tourism destination. This initiative promises sustainable income for the community while ensuring responsible forest management.



*Partners and stakeholders convene in a meeting between Ilmamusi CFA and representatives from tourism facilities and tour operators to explore avenues for collaborative efforts, boosting ecotourism prospects*

These five distinct projects, nurtured by the MCF, showcase the transformative power of collaborative conservation.

The year 2023 stands as a testament to the dedication of communities, the ingenuity of grantees, and the steadfast support of the MCF, all working together to weave a vibrant tapestry of sustainable land management, empowered communities, and flourishing ecosystems in Laikipia.

**In 2023, five distinct projects blossomed under the Mazingira Conservation Fund's (MCF's) care, each sowing seeds of hope across the region**

## TAPPING INTO THE LWF BOARD'S KNOWLEDGE AND EXPERTISE FOR IMPROVED PROJECT EFFECTIVENESS

In an effort to ensure that the board members are acquainted with the programs we are currently executing, we organized a field visit to one of the FAO project sites where LWF is supporting forest and landscape restoration through removal of invasive and reseeded in Maiyanat Community Land. FAO is dedicated to supporting interventions aimed at restoring degraded landscapes in the ASAL areas under the project “The Restoration Initiative,” that is being implemented in Laikipia, Isiolo, and Marsabit Counties.



*Peter Mathenge, explains to the Board the different interventions being employed to control the spread of Opuntia stricta*

In Maiyanat community land, our primary focus is the eradication of an invasive species called *Opuntia stricta* which is a major threat because the plant has invaded the area, depleting grazing areas and the much-needed pasture. During the visit, we had the opportunity to showcase the diverse methods we are employing to control the spread of this plant which includes:

- 1. Physical Control:** Where we engage the community in uprooting the plant and piling it into large heaps for natural decomposition. Thanks to funding from the Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) of the UN, we have restored 25 hectares using this method and opened it up for grazing. This intervention has allowed for natural grass regeneration to occur.

**2. Biological Control:** In collaboration with Africa Nature Investors (ANI), we are utilizing a greenhouse set up within the Loldaiga Conservancy to breed the cochineal virus.

This greenhouse is adjacent to the Maiyanat community land, making it convenient for interventions in both the community land and within the private conservancy. The cochineal virus sucks the flesh of the plant. The virus is effective during dry seasons but dormant in rainy seasons. We have designated areas where this method is being applied to further eradicate this invasive plant.

**3. Utilization of the Plant:** Partnering with FAO, we have a pilot project where we are converting *Opuntia stricta* into animal feeds. FAO supported the acquisition of a cactus shredder (meant for crushing the plant into small pieces) and flamethrowers (to burn the spikes of the cactus plant, which leads to the death of the animals once consumed). This pilot project is a game-changer in the management of this species. Additionally, some community members are using the plant for small-scale biogas production as a source of fuel at the household level.

The Board members were delighted to witness the progress made by LWF in the implementation of the land restoration projects, positively impacting the community. During a knowledge-sharing session, Dr. Kiome who is the Chairman of the Board proposed exploring additional alternatives for controlling the plant, including mechanical methods, to reduce costs and expedite the process. Dr. Kiome also committed to initiate discussions with the Kenya Agricultural and Livestock Research Organization (KALRO) team to develop a feeds formula that will inform the pilot project on converting *Opuntia stricta* into animal feeds. Paul Kimiri emphasized the importance of exploring Loisaba Conservancy to learn best practices for the proper disposal of *Opuntia stricta* to prevent regrowth.

The Board members were impressed with the interventions for land restoration. “Together, we are making strides towards a sustainable and productive environment that is able to support healthy populations of wildlife and the livelihoods of the community,” Dr. Kiome said.

The visit, held on 30th November 2023, was a good platform that brought board members together. Similar engagements will be organized for other projects to ensure that there is knowledge sharing for effective implementation of projects.



**FAO is dedicated to supporting interventions aimed at restoring degraded landscapes in the ASAL areas under the project “The Restoration Initiative,” that is being implemented in Laikipia, Isiolo, and Marsabit Counties.**

## FROM A ONCE-PERCEIVED NUISANCE PLANT TO A LIFE-SAVING SOLUTION: OPUNTIA STRICTA CONVERTED INTO ANIMAL FEEDS

With *Opuntia stricta* spreading rapidly and occupying much-needed grazing areas, the Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) of the UN, in partnership with LWF, is in the initial stages of a pilot project aimed at utilizing the plant as animal feed. With our experience in implementing interventions aimed at controlling the spread of this plant in Laikipia North, we have discovered a new way of dealing with it by converting it into animal feed.

Tapping into local knowledge, we have learned that the main challenge with the plant is usually the sharp spikes, which pose a challenge as animals try to navigate it in search of grass. The spikes are too dangerous because they cause blindness to the animals as they navigate, and once consumed, the animals become emaciated slowly, regardless of the drugs administered; they eventually die.

With support from the FAO, we obtained flamethrowers (which burn the spikes) and a cactus shredder machine that cuts the plant into tiny pieces, making it more palatable. The acquisition of these equipment will play a crucial role in the success of this initiative. With this method, we are assured and guaranteed of a better way of managing the plant and, most importantly, incentivizing the community to take part in the restoring their land.



*Eric of FAO burns the Opuntia spikes using a flame thrower.*

The *Opuntia* plant, known for its high moisture content, once fed to the animals, is expected to reduce the water needs for the livestock significantly, making it an ideal initiative for the project area, which is classified as an Arid and Semi-Arid Land (ASAL) with major challenges of water accessibility.

The first phase of this project is being carried out in Maiyanat community land, which occupies an approximate area of 6300 Ha, with  $\frac{3}{4}$  of this land being invaded by the plant. In collaboration with the Kenya Agricultural and Research Organization (KALRO), discussions on developing a feeds' formula have been initiated to ensure that the nutrient composition is factored in.

On 28th November, 2023, we were privileged to conduct the first test on the project site for the cactus shredder machine. The community members present were delighted and commented that once this project is fully rolled out, it will reduce the livestock mortality rate during the dry months.



*FAO, LWF and community members conducting a test on the cactus shredder machine*

“With the elimination of these sharp spikes on *Opuntia*, we are now happy that our livestock will feed on it, ensuring that our animals do not die of hunger. We will no longer be forced to relocate to other areas in search of pasture,” James Masaini, a community leader, said.

As we continue with the next steps, we anticipate not only overcoming the challenges posed by *Opuntia stricta* but also fostering a sustainable and resilient ecosystem. By converting a once troublesome plant into valuable livestock feed, we will incentivize the community to actively participate in the restoration process, thus accelerating our efforts in the landscape.

**With the elimination of these sharp spikes on *Opuntia*, we are now happy that our livestock will feed on it, ensuring that our animals do not die of hunger.**

## GROWING GREEN FUTURES: CIAT PROJECT MAKES REMARKABLE PROGRESS



*Happy faces from the Lotasha Ewaso women group as they received seedlings from LWF during the distribution process*

We are delighted to share the latest updates on the “My Farm Trees,” project that is supported by Bioversity International. The project aims at transforming smallholder-led restoration efforts as it continues to transform lives and landscapes in Mukogodo West Ward of Laikipia North. The implementation of this project is in partnership with Miti Alliance and Kenya Forest Research Institute.

### Project Highlights

In recent months, our community’s commitment to environmental sustainability has flourished. The Inception Meeting laid the groundwork for the project, showcasing how technology and innovation can empower communities to drive restoration efforts. The Co-Creation Workshop fostered collaboration, our community actively engaged in the selection of ten well-suited tree species, emphasizing the importance of indigenous varieties for biodiversity and ecological resilience.

Practical knowledge soared as Michael Waiyaki of Miti Alliance led a hands-on session, empowering participants in the art of cultivating trees.

The tree planting launch event at Ewaso Primary School on September 22, 2023 was a pivotal moment, symbolizing the official launch of the “My Farm Trees” project. Distinguished guests, community members, and project partners gathered to plant 150 trees, underscoring our collective dedication to a greener, healthier environment.

### Donor’s Monitoring Visit

We were honoured to host Francis Oduor, the country project coordinator, for a monitoring visit to witness first-hand, the impact of our collective efforts. Visiting various project sites, Francis noted with delight the exceptional care bestowed upon the trees planted. We are excited to announce a staggering 90% survival rate—a testament to the dedication and resilience of our community.





*Francis Oduor, the country project coordinator in a project verification and monitoring exercise at one of the project sites*

Francis expressed profound satisfaction at the progress achieved, commending the community for not only planting trees but nurturing them to maturity. This remarkable survival rate not only aligns with our project goals but also highlights the effectiveness of our community-led approach.

### Community Power in Action

Our success is a result of collective efforts, with each community member playing a vital role. From the initial Inception Meeting to the hands-on tree planting and ongoing care, this project exemplifies what can be achieved when a community comes together for a shared vision.

Our implementing partner's observations underscore the incredible stewardship demonstrated by our communities. Each surviving tree represents not only a step towards environmental restoration but also a testament to the resilience and dedication of those tending to our shared green future.

As we celebrate these milestones, we look ahead with excitement. The CIAT project is not just about planting trees; it's about cultivating sustainable change and forging a path towards a greener, healthier future for all.

We are grateful to our partners and members of the community for their unwavering support and dedication to making our environment healthier and more resilient.

Stay tuned for more updates as we cultivate a greener future together!

**Our success is a result of collective efforts, with each community member playing a vital role**

## ILMAMUSI'S WALK WILD EVENT UNVEILS THE POWER OF UNITY IN MUKOGODO FOREST



*Laikipia North Member of Parliament Hon. Sarah Kaparo flags off the second edition of the Walk Wild event*

In the heart of Laikipia County lies Mukogodo Forest, a sanctuary of natural beauty spanning an impressive 30,189 hectares. At the forefront of its preservation is the ILMAMUSI Mukogodo Forest Association, a registered Community Forest Association (CFA) dedicated to managing the Mukogodo Forest Reserve in collaboration with the Kenya Forest Service.

In a bid to enhance visibility and communication regarding their conservation efforts, ILMAMUSI CFA orchestrated the second edition of the “Walk Wild” event. This ambitious endeavor brought together a diverse group of 600 participants, including men, youth, and women, to champion awareness for landscape restoration in the Mukogodo ecosystem while fostering a call for peace and unity.

Working hand in hand with partners such as the Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) of the UN, Lewa Wildlife Conservancy, Laikipia Wildlife Forum (LWF), Laikipia Conservancies Association (LCA), and others, ILMAMUSI shaped an event not only to raise awareness on forest conservation but also as a strategic marketing platform to generate funds to support Forest and general Landscape Restoration within the Mukogodo Ecosystem.

The Walk Wild event served as a vibrant canvas, painting the key thematic areas of FOLAREP, the looming threats of climate change, and the ambitious 15 billion tree-growing national campaign. Every step echoed a call for environmental consciousness.



Beyond a simple walk, this event aimed to cultivate partnerships and mobilize resources crucial for the ongoing conservation activities championed by ILMAMUSI CFA. Collaborations with the above-named stakeholders showcased the power of unity in environmental stewardship.

More than a physical journey, the event sought to strengthen community engagements, promoting a sense of oneness and peaceful coexistence within Mukogodo forest and its surrounding landscapes.

The event was planned by ILMAMUSI CFA in partnership with a dedicated committee made up of key stakeholders namely; LWF, Borana Conservancy, Lewa Wildlife Conservancy, County Government of Laikipia and IMPACT Kenya. Invitations and online registrations started a month prior, creating anticipation for the 10-kilometer walk from Sarara camp, winding through Ololorten and Nandungoro at the heart of the forest, concluding at Lokusero Secondary School.

The walk, flagged off by the area Member of Parliament (MP) and the County Forest Conservator (CFC) at Sarara camp, commenced at 1100hrs, guiding participants through the lush forest terrain. Safety was a priority, with water supply points and security teams deployed strategically along the route, ensuring a harmonious journey. When the clock struck 1200hrs, the walk reached its culmination at Lokusero Secondary School, marking not just the end of a physical journey but a symbolic stride towards a greener, more sustainable future for Mukogodo Forest.



The support extended by partners such as FAO, Lewa Wildlife Conservancy, LCA, LWF and others played a pivotal role in the event's success. Their contributions ranged from technical support to mobilization efforts, emphasizing the collective commitment to environmental conservation.

The "Walk Wild" event, orchestrated by ILMAMUSI CFA, stands as a testament to the potential unlocked when communities and organizations unite for a common cause. It not only highlighted the beauty of Mukogodo Forest but also underscored the urgency of collective efforts in preserving our natural heritage.

As the echoes of footsteps in Mukogodo Forest fade, the resonating call to action lingers. The success of this event is not just in the steps taken but in the lasting impact it leaves on the ecosystem and the communities it serves.

The journey continues, and the strides made during the "Walk Wild" event are an invitation for all to join hands and stride towards a sustainable and harmonious future,

**More than a physical journey, the event sought to strengthen community engagements, promoting a sense of oneness and peaceful coexistence within Mukogodo forest and its surrounding landscapes**

## NG'ARISHA MTAA AND LWF UNITE FOR SUSTAINABLE SOLID WASTE MANAGEMENT



*Likii Community members come together to collect solid waste within the estate*

Ng'arisha Mtaa, a dynamic youth-led Community-Based Organization (CBO), orchestrated an impressive year-end cleanup, leaving a lasting impact on the community. Laikipia Wildlife Forum (LWF) joined hands with Ng'arisha Mtaa to contribute to the success of this significant environmental initiative.

As the event unfolded on December 29, 2023, Likii Estate witnessed an inspiring display of unity and commitment towards sustainable solid waste management. Ng'arisha Mtaa, with its unwavering dedication to empowering the youth and fostering positive change, organized the cleanup that drew participation from community members, government representatives, volunteers, and local businesses.

The collaborative cleanup effort not only improved the cleanliness of Likii Estate but also served as a platform to educate the community on the critical practice of waste segregation. Participants engaged in hands-on activities such as waste collection while also attending educational sessions, including the impactful “Bonga Green” initiative—a panel discussion aimed at raising awareness about responsible waste disposal and the environmental consequences of irresponsible practices.



*LWF's Program Officer Peter Mathenge sensitizes Likii Community members on sustainable solid waste management during the Bonga Green panel discussion session.*

LWF, recognizing the importance of grassroots initiatives in environmental conservation, was proud to support Ng'arisha Mtaa in this endeavor. We are committed to fostering similar youth-led initiatives that contribute to the well-being of our communities and the environment.

As Ng'arisha Mtaa reflects on its achievements in the past year, LWF celebrates the success of the youth-led approach to sustainable solid waste management. The combined efforts of the community, local businesses, and supporting entities like LWF are paving the way for a cleaner, healthier, and more environmentally conscious urban community.

Looking ahead, LWF is excited about the prospect of continuing to support initiatives that align with our commitment to environmental conservation.

**As we collaborate with local authorities and businesses, we are optimistic that these grassroots efforts will not only inspire positive change but also contribute to creating a more sustainable and greener future for the communities we serve.**

## JUSTDIGGIT VISITS LAIKIPIA WILDLIFE FORUM



A team from JUSTDIGGIT visited the Laikipia Wildlife Forum (LWF) on 23rd November, 2023. The team included Hillary Rotich, a Landscape Manager for Northern Kenya; Simon Kagima, a Logistics Officer and Ruth Wamugi, a Finance Officer. They were received and hosted by Ms. Celline Achieng', the Executive Director of LWF; and Faith Jimmy, a Project Manager with Ontulili Primates Protection (OPP).

Both organizations highlighted their key areas of work after which they discussed areas of synergies. LWF has six programmatic areas that include Wildlife, Water, Tourism, Rangeland, Conservation Education, and Landuse Management. The organization provides a platform for dialogue for a cross section of land owners and land users including local community groups, private ranchers, pastoralists, large and small scale farmers, tourism facility owners, among others.

JUSTDIGGIT cools down the earth by regreening African landscapes. On their projects, they work closely with communities and local partners to restore dry land. Their proven regreening techniques include rainwater harvesting (digging bunds), tree restoration (Kisiki Hai/FMNR), and developing grass seed banks. All their projects are owned and implemented by communities that live off the land.

The two organizations highlighted the projects and programmes they are working on in the greater Laikipia landscape. They also listed the partners and other stakeholders they are working with. This informed areas of synergies particularly with regard to restoration of degraded land. Both partners agreed to explore these areas in anticipation of working together in 2024 and beyond.

## LAIKIPIA WILDLIFE FORUM PAYS LEWA A COURTESY CALL



*LWF Director Poses with the LEWA Conservation Education lead Mr. Emphatus Mugo (Left) and Paul Kimiri, LWF board chair (Right) during the Forums courtesy call to LEWA*

Laikipia Wildlife Forum's (LWF's) Executive Director, Ms. Celline Achieng' and a LWF Board member, Mr. Paul Kimiri paid a courtesy call to LEWA Wildlife Conservancy on 22nd November 2023. Ephantus Mugo who is in charge of Conservation Education gave us a very warm welcome.

The discussions mainly revolved around Conservation Education (CE) because both organizations have this programme as one of its pillars. LEWA informed that they have an outreach programme which caters for 27 primary and secondary schools. The programme constitutes infrastructure-development, bursary sponsorship for students, and CE.

LWF also informed that CE is one of its thematic areas of implementation. CE for LWF was previously very strong and impacted many lives particularly the locals, through field visits.

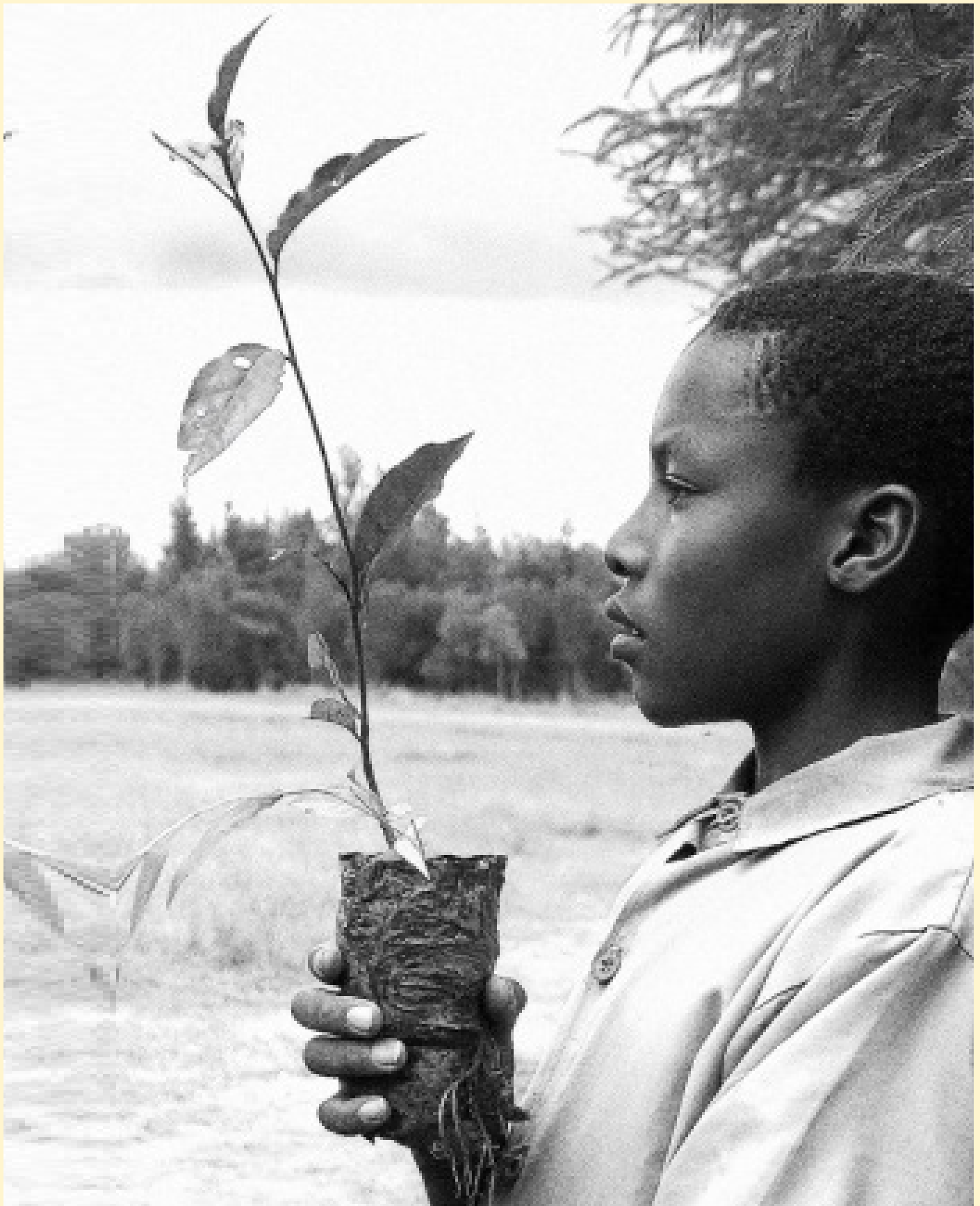
Indeed the bus that used to take students round the conservancies and other conservation areas has positively impacted many careers. LWF is currently reviving CE and has so far made contact with the Wildlife Clubs of Kenya (WCK), The Leo Project, Ol Pejeta Conservancy (OPC), Borana Conservancy and now LEWA Conservancy. We have also begun making visits to schools. For example, we recently paid an exchange visit to Three Rivers Academy.

LEWA is a member of the International Zoological Educators (IZE) and is therefore well placed to lead other organizations that have Conservation Education Programmes within the region. In this regard, we discussed the need to strengthen the Northern Kenya Conservation Educators Working Group (NKCEWG). We also discussed consideration for developing a common curriculum for CE for Northern Kenya. This will be done in liaison with the WCK, which is mandated nationally to undertake Conservation Education.



# A TREE FOR MY RIVER

NANYUKI GREEN CHAMPIONS' SELF HELP GROUP INITIATIVE



## WHO WE ARE

From the West side of Mount Kenya Forest originates a river, Nanyuki River. Once pristine and life giving to both flora and fauna, years of human neglect and degradation have left the river bare exposed to all manner of abuse. Once a habitat for the Columbus monkeys who'd be seen all year round dwell on the centuries-old gigantic indigenous trees that marked its banks, human indiscriminate and rampant logging has since left the river desolate, hardly providing any shelter anymore. Sadly, not even the rare fresh water Trout fish can be spotted anymore as they can only survive on clean freezing cold freely running waters.



*Nanyuki River: effects of degradation*



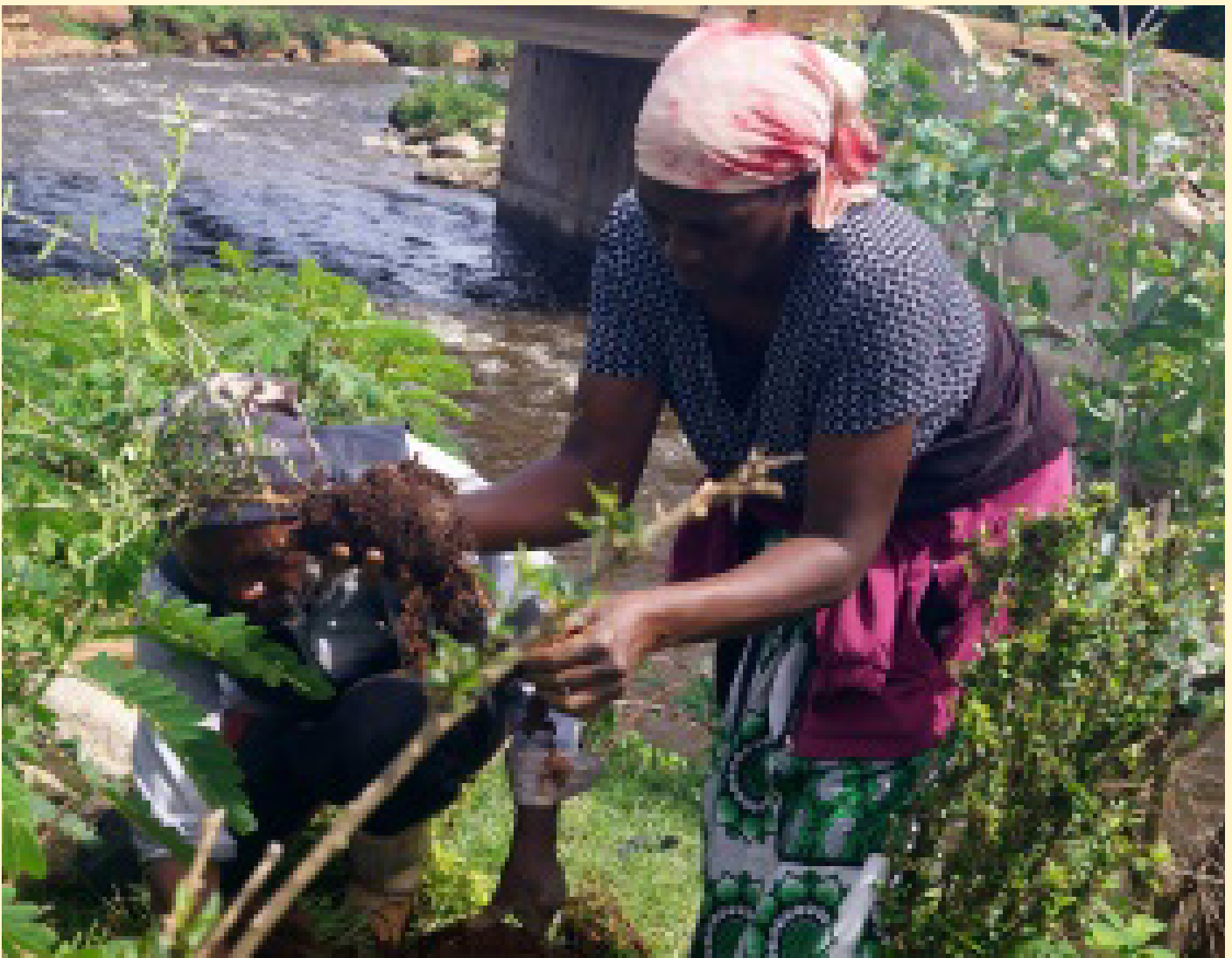
*Pupils from Katheri Primary School receive tree seedlings*

Fueled by a shared passion for nature and a deep concern for the ecosystem's wellbeing, in April 2023 a team comprising individuals from within surrounding communities namely Kanyoni village, Mwea B and Kwa Huku agreed to take action towards restoring this river. By July, the group was duly registered as self-help non-profit making community group.

Guided by and operating within the international conservation standards, we are committed to the restoration of Nanyuki river. Our vision is "A healthy river ecosystem that offers all the ecosystem services for the current and future generations."

We are mainly focused on the following areas:

- Planting/ growing bamboos and select indigenous trees along the riparian areas,
- Placing of gabions to prevent erosion on the river banks,
- Establishment of a well-managed tree nursery and
- Organizing educative environmental programmes and activities for pupils and youth.



*Community members planting trees along the river riparian*

# TRANSFORMATIVE EXPEDITION WITH LAIKIPIA WILDLIFE FORUM

Article by: *Candy Achieng*



My student-attachment at the Laikipia Wildlife Forum (LWF) has been nothing short of transformative, providing me with a unique opportunity to immerse myself in the world of conservation and community engagement, contributing to and learning from the incredible projects I participated in implementing..

Over the past three months, I have had the privilege of working alongside passionate individuals committed to preserving the rich biodiversity of the Laikipia Region. I gained a profound understanding of the efforts and strategies employed by the Forum in conserving the rich biodiversity of Laikipia.

One of the key learnings during this time was the importance of collaborative efforts and community engagement in conservation and restoration efforts. My participation in the various projects activities, including the implementation of the GEF-6 funded project, and CIAT, allowed me to forge meaningful interactions with communities in the landscape.

In addition to gaining practical field experience, my time with the LWF has exposed me to a wealth of knowledge through interactions with experts in the field of conservation and natural resource management. The learning environment has been conducive for intellectual growth, encouraging me to think critically and consider the broader implications of conservation efforts.

I am grateful for the warm welcome and mentorship provided by the dedicated team at LWF. This was a transformative experience that enriched my understanding of the intricate dynamics between conservation, community engagement and restoration efforts. The collective efforts of the LWF team and its partners have demonstrated the positive impact that collaborative conservation initiatives can have on both the environment and local communities.



*Ms. Candy Achieng during one of LWFs project field visit in Laikipia County*



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